

Title:	Eye Witness Account of the Death of Tecumseh by Captain Andrew Johnson, 1842		
Creator:	Captain Andrew Johnson		
Dates of Material:	1842	Reference Number:	RG 635
Scope and Content:	One 6 page letter signed by Captain Andrew Johnson in which he presents an eye witness account of the death of Tecumseh at the hands of Colonel Richard Johnson at the Battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813.		
Summary of Contents:	<p>This letter was written by Captain Andrew Johnson on June 1st, 1842 in Platt County, Missouri. He sends the letter to the Committee of Invitation regarding an anniversary celebration of the Battle of the Thames. The names that are included on this list are: E. Best, M.W. Jackson, Seth Sallisbury, D. Bullock, Wm. Elwell, Wm. Overfield, J.H. Broadhead, Samuel Myers, Samuel A. Smith, Abel M. Griffiths, John W. Ryon, John Galbraith, M.B. Lowry, J. Johnson, George F. Lehman, James Patton, J.P. Steele, Samuel P. Callings and Daniel L. Sherwood. There are some other names on the list, but these have been crossed out.</p> <p>He acknowledges his receipt of the invitation to the ceremony which is to be held at Danville, Pennsylvania on the 5th of October, 1842. He says the “hero of the Thames”, Colonel Richard Johnson is expected to be there. Andrew Johnson received a special letter of invitation because he is one of the surviving officers of the Kentucky Mounted Regiment. He regrets that he will not be able to attend the event because he lives near the western border of Missouri and he is bound by his duties.</p> <p>He writes about the Colonel effusively in passages such as “His manly bearing and fire that lighted his countenance (sic) inspired us all with a sure presage of history”. Captain Johnson says that he served under the Colonel in 2 campaigns. He claims to have been a witness to the death of Tecumseh which took place on October 5, 1813. He describes how the Colonel approached Tecumseh who was flanked by “savage warriors”. He laid Tecumseh low, but he received a severe</p>		

	<p>wound. The Indians gave way when their leader fell. Andrew Johnson writes about his emotion and tears at the thought that Colonel Johnson was hurt. Captain Johnson thanks Heaven that the Colonel did not die. He is very pleased that Colonel Johnson was rewarded with “the most honourable station in the world”. [Captain Johnson writes as though the Colonel has, or will become president of the United States, however he is the Vice President]. It is signed “I am truly yours Andrew Johnson”.</p> <p>A transcript of the letter is included as well as a map showing the location of Danville.</p>
Physical Description/Condition:	<p>The letter is in excellent condition. There are folds in the pages and some very slight mottling which does not affect the text. The last 2 pages are slightly jagged on the lower right hand corner, but again, this does not affect the text.</p>
Biographical / Administrative Notes:	<p>Richard Mentor Johnson</p> <p>Richard Mentor Johnson, 1780-1850 of Kentucky was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1806. He was commissioned as a Colonel in the Kentucky Militia. He was in command of a regiment of mounted volunteers from 1812-1813. It is at the Battle of the Thames that he killed the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. When the war was over, he returned to the House of Representatives and was appointed to the Senate in 1819. His openly interracial relationship with a slave was widely criticized and hindered his political ambitions. He lost his senate seat in 1829 but returned to the House the next year.</p> <p>In 1836, he was a nominee for the 9th Vice President of the United States. Under the Twelfth Amendment, Senate chose him as the Vice-President under President Martin Van Buren. It is claimed that he used the fact that he killed Tecumseh to his personal advantage. His campaign slogan was “Rumsey dumsey, Rumsey dumpsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumseh.” He served as Vice-President from 1837-1841.</p> <p>He was accused of lining his pockets with government funds and supporting questionable undertakings. His controversial private life was also the object of much derision. There was a campaign to remove him from the Democratic ticket in 1840, subsequently, President Van Buren campaigned for re-election without a running mate.</p>

Johnson unsuccessfully tried to return to public office. Finally, in 1850, he was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives but he died on November 19, 1850 only 2 weeks into his term.

Captain Andrew Johnson

Captain Andrew Johnson was the son of Berwick Johnson (brother of Richard Mentor Johnson). He was born in Kentucky [some sources say in 1790 others say 1797]. He had a limited education but his great patriotism led him to enlist in his Uncle Richard M. Johnson's regiment. He also commanded a company which he led at the Raisin and Thames. In 1837, he became an Indian agent in St. Louis. He represented Scott County, Kentucky for 1 term in the State Legislature and in 1844 he was elected to the state senate in Missouri. Andrew died on May 29, 1859 from an operation to correct a stone in his bladder.

Source: Paxton, William McClung. *Annals of Platte County, Missouri: From its Exploration down to June 1, 1897*. Kansas City, Missouri. Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1897

Tecumseh

Tecumseh, 1768-1813 was a Native American Shawnee warrior and chief. He was born in the Ohio Country, now known as Ohio. Tecumseh founded the Indian village that the Americans called Prophetstown located north of Lafayette, Indiana. Prophetstown became a large, multi-tribal community. Tecumseh was a charismatic leader and was proficient at politics and military strategy. He created a pan-Indian alliance which was used to counteract intertribal conflict and indifference.

Tecumseh and his confederacy formed an alliance with the British during the War of 1812. Tecumseh's confederacy helped in the capture of Fort Detroit. After U.S. naval forces took control of Lake Erie in 1813, the British and their Indian allies retreated into Upper Canada, where they faced American forces at the Battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813. Tecumseh's death, as well as the end of the war meant the end of the pan-Indian alliance. It only took a few years for the remaining tribal lands in the Old Northwest to be surrendered to the U.S. government.

There was much controversy surrounding Tecumseh's death. There were arguments about who actually killed him. Johnson definitely killed an Indian in battle and was himself shot four times by musket balls. An old friend of Tecumseh's named Shabeni lent credence to the story of Johnson by describing Johnson's horse very meticulously.

	<p>Tecumseh has become a folk hero. His vision was a pan-Indian movement to secure the land for his people to support their way of life.</p> <p>Source: Sugden, John. <i>Tecumseh a Life</i>. New York. Henry Holt and Company, 1998</p>
Material Held at Other Repositories:	<p><i>Letter from William Henry Harrison, North Bend to Colonel John O'Fallon of St. Louis describing the death of Tecumseh.</i> – Special Collections Research Center, Swen Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia</p>
Related Material:	<p><i>Guy St-Denis papers, 1980-2005, n.d.</i> – RG 77 – Archives and Special Collections, Brock University</p> <p><i>A chapter of the history of the War of 1812 in the Northwest : embracing the surrender of the Northwestern army and fort, at Detroit, August 16, 1812; with a description and biographical sketch of the celebrated Indian Chief Tecumseh</i> by Colonel William Stanley Hatch.- E 355.2 H36</p> <p><i>Life of Tecumseh, and his brother the Prophet: with a historical sketch of the Shawanoe Indians</i> by Benjamin Drake. - E 99 S35 T118</p> <p><i>The story of Tecumseh</i> by Norman S. Gurd.- E 99 S35 T15 1912</p> <p><i>Tecumseh</i> by Lloyd Roberts - E 99 S35 R62 1929</p> <p><i>Tecumseh: a chronicle of the last great leader of his people</i> by Ethel T. Raymond. - E 99 S35 T157 1920</p> <p><i>Tecumseh: a life</i> by John Sugden. - E 99 S35 S86 1998</p> <p><i>Tecumseh & Brock : the War of 1812</i> by James Laxer - FC 442 L394 2012</p> <p><i>Tecumseh's bones</i> by Guy St-Denis - E 99 S35 S7 2005</p> <p>All books are located in Archives and Special Collections, Brock University</p>

Location:	Brock University Archives		
Source Information:	Purchased from Between the Covers Books, January 2018		
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